



RE: Support for HB 2726

The Coalition for a Healthy Oregon (COHO) is an association of coordinated care organizations (CCOs) and affiliated companies that serve nearly half of our state's Medicaid population through the Oregon Health Plan. COHO's mission is to promote the delivery of accessible, high-quality and cost-effective health care through local, community-based managed care delivery systems. The CCO model works to strengthen community health by breaking down barriers and increasing access to care. Since the inception of CCOs, Oregon's community-based model has proven to be successful in keeping quality up and costs down through effective management strategies that focus on prevention and disease management to improve outcomes for our patients.

However, when there are members of our communities who cannot qualify for health coverage, CCOs are unable to effectively manage and coordinate their care. This leads to higher utilization of what should otherwise be avoidable emergency room visits and contributes to rising costs within our healthcare delivery system. When patients do not have access to care, the state cannot spend resources on prevention strategies, like helping people get to their doctors' appointments and take their medication, and are instead forced to spend those dollars on costly hospital visits.

This is antithetical to Oregon's transformed health care system. We know connecting patients to the care they need is key to reducing the cost of health care in our state. Eating healthy, exercising regularly, avoiding tobacco, and receiving preventive services (such as cancer screenings, preventive visits and vaccinations) are all ways in which CCOs promote prevention in order to help Oregonians stay healthy.

Real health improvements cannot be made when patients can access care only at birth and then again when their health care needs have reached an emergency level. To truly meet Oregon's triple aim of improving outcomes while reducing costs, CCOs need the ability to manage care for all patients within their communities who cannot afford coverage so they can intervene early to prevent costly and long-term complications rather than only pay for emergency services.

Improving access to care is a core mission of COHO's members, and we are pleased to support HB 2726, a positive step in continuing to meet Oregon's triple aim.